

From: Stephen McNicholas
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Department of Justice:

I wish to add my comments to the Microsoft Settlement. I don't believe that the existing settlement is sufficient.

Yes, Microsoft has done some good things (including making it easier for most people to use computers). However, I believe that Microsoft is a monopoly in the operating system, office suite, and browser markets, thus allowing them to consistently overcharge their customers. With Microsoft's new licensing restrictions, they are going to be able to gouge their corporate customers. (As you know corporate IT departments tend to standardize their systems.. Since they have been locked into Microsoft products for some time, they may not be able to easily switch to other products.)

There is a solution.. Its called the WINE project (www.winehq.com). WINE is an open source implementation of Microsoft API for Unix based systems.. API is the interface between the operating system, and the software that the user really wants to use. In plain english, it allows Unix based systems to run Microsoft programs.

As you know, Linux is an open source (free, in both the meanings "free beer" and "free to read the source code and modify"), and has been touted as a potential competitor of Microsoft. Linux has come a long way from its beginnigs, and even offers some powerful GUIs (for examples, see www.gnome.org and www.kde.org), and some powerful office suites (www.openoffice.org, www.koffice.org, etc.)

As a remedy, Microsoft should be forced to publish their API publicly, completely, and accurately. Note that Microsoft does not have to publish the source code.. Instead, they can just document how it all works. Moreover, Microsoft should be forced to document their closed file formats. for example, the .doc format used by Microsoft word. this would allow others to develop programs that can easily read Microsoft Word documents.

I believe that a combination of the WINE project and Linux would be an extremely powerful competitor to Microsoft.

thank you.

Stephen McNicholas